[0036]   What is claimed is:

1.   In a telecommunications network, a method of providing real-time Internet access to a caller having only a standard telephone and plain old telephone service, comprising the steps of:

receiving at a local switch a destination number representing a request for Internet access from the caller;

routing the call to an Internet server for providing the Internet access;

converting the destination number to a URL (universal resource locator) at the Internet server;

routing the URL from the Internet server to the Internet;

receiving a response from the Internet at the Internet server, the response including digital information;

converting the digital information in the response to a voice message, the voice message including information from the Web site and prompts for the caller; and

routing the voice message to the caller.

2.   The method defined in claim 1, further comprising the step of releasing the call when the local switch recognizes that a special code has been entered by the caller.

3.   The method defined in claim 1, wherein the destination number includes a feature activation code and a URL code.

4.   The method defined in claim 1, wherein the Internet server includes a data processor for processing information, tone detection circuitry for recognizing

dialed multi-frequency tone signals, a text-to-speech system for generating voice messages and announcements to be played to the caller, and data memory for formulating queries and responses to the caller.

5.   The method defined in claim 1, wherein the local switch includes a URL interceptor for routing the call to the Internet server.

6.   The method defined in claim 2, wherein the Internet server includes a data processor, tone detection circuitry, a text-to-speech system, and data memory.

7.   The method defined in claim 6, wherein the destination number includes a feature activation code and a URL code.

8.   The method defined in claim 7, wherein the Internet server includes a data processor, tone detection circuitry, a text-to-speech system, and data memory.

9.   The method defined in claim 8, wherein the local switch includes a URL interceptor for routing the call to the Internet server.

10.   A system for providing real-time Internet access to a caller having only a standard telephone and plain old telephone service, comprising:

means for receiving at a local switch a destination number representing a request for Internet access from the caller;

means for routing the call to an Internet server for providing the Internet access;

means for converting the destination number to a URL at the Internet server;

means for routing the URL from the Internet server to the Internet;

means for receiving a response from the Internet at the Internet server, the response including digital information;

means for converting the digital information in the response to a voice message, the voice message including information from the Web site and prompts for the caller; and

means for routing the voice message to the caller.

11. The system defined in claim 10, further comprising means for releasing the call when the local switch recognizes that a special code has been entered by the caller.

12. The system defined in claim 10, wherein the destination number includes a feature activation code and a URL code.

13. The system defined in claim 10, wherein the Internet server includes a data processor for processing information, tone detection circuitry for recognizing dialed multi-frequency tone signals, a text-to-speech system for generating voice messages and announcements to be played to the caller, and data memory for formulating queries and responses to the caller.

14. The system defined in claim 10, wherein the local switch includes a URL interceptor for routing the call to the Internet server.

15. The system defined in claim 11, wherein the Internet server includes a data processor, tone detection circuitry, a text-to-speech system, and data memory.

16.   The system defined in claim 15, wherein the destination number includes a feature activation code and a URL code.

17.   The system defined in claim 16, wherein the Internet server includes a data processor, tone detection circuitry, a text-to-speech system, and data memory.

18.   The system defined in claim 17, wherein the local switch includes a URL interceptor for routing the call to the Internet server.